



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



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Director

August 30, 2018

TO: David W. Louie, Chair
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Laura Shell, Commissioner
Pat Modugno, Commissioner

FROM:  Anita D. Gutierrez, MPL, AICP, Supervising Regional Planner
Community Studies West Section

**SUBJECT: CONNECT SOUTHWEST LA: A TOD SPECIFIC PLAN FOR WEST
ATHENS-WESTMONT
Project No. 2016-000317-(2)
Plan No. RPPL2016002080
Environmental Assessment No. RPPL2017009622
State Clearing House No. 2017051051
September 12, 2018 - Agenda Item No. 6**

The above-mentioned item is a request to recommend approval of Project No. 2016-000317-(2), Connect Southwest LA: A TOD Specific Plan for West Athens-Westmont (Plan No. RPPL2016002080) and associated Environmental Impact Report (Environmental Assessment No. RPPL2017009622) to the Board of Supervisors.

INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles County General Plan (General Plan), which was updated in November 2015, identifies 11 "Transit Oriented District" (TOD) priority areas along major transit corridors. These TOD areas are considered well-suited for higher density housing and mixed uses surrounding existing major commercial, employment, and civic activity nodes. The term "TOD" generally refers to areas, neighborhoods, or communities with concentrated residential, commercial, and mixed-use development served by high-quality transit. Successful TODs provide a variety of transportation options that help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase transit ridership, promote walking and bicycling,

reduce vehicle miles traveled, and facilitate housing and employment opportunities for all residents in the region.

The General Plan established the TOD Program, which requires the preparation of Specific Plans for each area. These TOD Specific Plans are intended to address the unique characteristics and needs of each community with regard to access, connectivity, pedestrian improvements, and safety. Connect Southwest LA: A TOD Specific Plan for West Athens-Westmont (Specific Plan) is the third of the 11 identified TOD areas to implement this program. The Specific Plan was initiated in January 2016, and was largely funded by a grant from Metro's Transit Oriented Development Planning Grant Program with some additional funding provided by the Second District.

The Specific Plan regulates approximately 658 acres of unincorporated West Athens-Westmont focused within a half-mile radius of Metro's Vermont/Athens Green Line Station. This area was identified as a TOD due to the proximity of the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station, the 64-acre campus of Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Southwest Station and adjacent municipal service center. The Specific Plan area is also within two miles of aerospace industries in the City of Hawthorne as well as new Los Angeles Stadium and Entertainment District at Hollywood Park in the City of Inglewood.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The Specific Plan is anticipated to guide future transit-oriented development throughout the project area in order to improve connectivity and access for all users and improve the safety, economic vitality, and overall quality of life for all stakeholders. The plan expands opportunities for more compact, infill development that remains compatible with the existing single-family neighborhoods and other land uses. The Specific Plan will be used in conjunction with the General Plan and County Code to provide more detailed design and development criteria for individual project proposals and public improvements in the project area. The plan defines the proposed land use plan, development standards, infrastructure improvements, design guidelines, and implementation program for any project proposed in the Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan would permit the potential development of up to 1,061 additional residential units and approximately 1.7 million square feet of nonresidential development over existing conditions in the plan area. In total, buildout of the project would allow up to 4,518 residential units and approximately 3.5 million square feet of non-residential development.

PROJECT LOCATION

The project area is generally bounded by Lohengrin/110th Street to the north, 120th/121st Street to the south, Wilton Place/Western Avenue to the west, and Vermont Avenue to the east. The major north/south arterial roadways are Western Avenue, Normandie Avenue and Vermont Avenue. The main east/west arterial roadway is Imperial Highway.

The Specific Plan area is bisected by the I-105 Glenn Anderson Freeway which runs below grade through the area and accommodates Metro's Green Line light rail service in its center median. Just over half a mile to the east, the I-110 Harbor Freeway parallels Vermont Avenue.

GOALS OF THE SPECIFIC PLAN

A specific vision and set of goals were defined for the Specific Plan based on input received from community members, the project task force, and County staff. The Specific Plan establishes the foundation for a more livable, accessible, and sustainable community by following these five Guiding Principles:

1. Promote uses in proximity to the transit station, along major streets, and at significant intersections that benefit from the economic opportunities afforded by the presence of the Green Line and major educational and public facilities.
2. Improve the public right of way to increase mobility options for pedestrians and bicyclists.
3. Enhance the sense of safety.
4. Ensure compatible development.
5. Improve the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station to make it more inviting to transit users.

Based on these principles, the Specific Plan lays out the following goals:

1. **A Mix of Land Uses.** Policies to achieve this goal include encouraging adaptive reuse and appropriately scaled infill, mixed-use developments (Policy 1.1) and promote a mix of uses and services to support the needs of families, youth, seniors, and a growing population (Policy 1.4).
2. **Affordable Housing Options.** Policies to achieve this goal include increasing the supply of different housing types affordable to the community (Policy 2.1); allowing for the integration of housing strategies such as Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units to alleviate the struggles of people experiencing homelessness (Policy 2.2); streamlining and expediting affordable housing projects through the project and environmental review process and coordinating with private and non-profit organizations (Policy 2.4) and ensuring there is no net loss of affordable housing units (Policy 2.5).
3. **A Diverse Economy.** Policies to achieve this goal include encouraging employment generating uses where possible by continuing to allow commercial uses along major corridors (Policy 3.1) and requiring that street frontages of commercial uses are located and designed to foster active pedestrian activity (Policy 3.3).

4. **A Variety of Mobility Options.** Policies to achieve this goal include providing a variety of transportation choices that promote accessible alternatives to the automobile including walking, biking and taking transit (Policy 4.2) and providing a safe and comfortable pedestrian network linking the transit station with LASC, commercial centers, county facilities and residential neighborhoods (Policy 4.6).
5. **A Safe and Healthy Community.** Policies to achieve this goal include incorporating more lighting and visibility along streets and pedestrian ways (Policy 5.1) and improving community health by supporting policies and programs aimed at promoting physical fitness and increasing access to healthy foods (Policy 5.5).
6. **Quality Parks, Open Space, and Public Space Infrastructure.** Policies to achieve this goal include encouraging the redesign of the west-side entrance to the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station with ample amenities and improve the comfort and safety of transit users (Policy 6.2) and increasing recreational opportunities for the community by creating neighborhood pocket parks and finding other creative uses for underutilized open space (Policy 6.4).

LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Land Use Districts

The Specific Plan is divided into five land use districts to better address the unique characteristics within each area.

1. **Vermont Station Corridor.** This district encompasses the properties fronting Vermont Avenue from 110th to 120th Street and includes the west side entrance to the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station. This area is intended to be developed over time as a transit supportive environment providing a higher-intensity mix of retail, office, restaurant uses and residential development in a compact, walkable setting. A variety of open spaces such as pocket parks and urban plazas could also be provided in this district.
2. **Civic Center.** This district encompasses the properties on the south side of Imperial Highway between Western Avenue and Budlong Avenue and is occupied by institutional land uses, including Los Angeles Southwest College, that share similar building form, massing, architectural design and relation to the street. Underutilized land owned by the County at the corner of Imperial Highway and Normandie Avenue has the potential to accommodate additional community-serving uses and the Specific plan will help facilitate the transition of these existing uses to a higher intensity development. Over time, the area would integrate the multifamily residential areas to the east into a more walkable, pedestrian-oriented district that is well connected to the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station.

3. **Western Avenue Commercial Corridor.** This district is located on the north side of the I-105 freeway along Western Avenue and is suitable for community serving uses including infill commercial only as well as mixed use development that combine housing with retail, service, office and other uses to promote more pedestrian activity.
4. **Single Family Residential.** This district encompasses the residential neighborhoods north of the I-105 Freeway and west of Normandie Avenue, and south of the I-105 Freeway and west of Budlong Avenue. These neighborhoods consist of typical post-war single family housing tracts that are an important housing type benefiting the community. The Specific Plan aims to preserve these neighborhoods.
5. **Multifamily Residential.** This district encompasses residential neighborhoods north of the I-105 Freeway and east of Normandie Avenue and south of the I-105 Freeway and east of Budlong Avenue that consists mostly of multi-family duplexes, triplexes and apartment buildings built between 1920 and 1960 that are an important source of affordable housing. The Specific Plan provides opportunities for compatible development that promote transit supportive densities of affordable and work force housing close to transit and other services.

Specific strategies and conceptual plan drawings are included for each district to depict desirable building locations, streetscapes and relationship between buildings and open spaces. The strategies and concepts are not prescriptive but illustrate one alternative method of development consistent with the recommendations provided in the Specific Plan.

Regulating Code

The regulating code establishes ten new zones. Each zone includes use regulations, built form regulations, building frontage standards, open space standards, landscape standards and other design standards addressing streetscape elements such as lighting, furnishings, public art, and outdoor dining. The purpose is to ensure cohesive, high quality design without dictating a particular architectural style and to foster innovative design features and site-appropriate architecture constructed with quality materials complemented by landscape and open spaces providing connectivity between uses.

West Athens-Westmont Residential 1 (R-1). Preserves the scale and form of the area's existing single-family residential neighborhoods. It accommodates primarily detached single-family homes at a density up to nine dwelling units per acre.

West Athens-Westmont Residential 2 (R-2). Provides opportunities for medium density housing including a variety of attached housing types such as courtyard housing, row homes, townhomes, and garden apartments containing multiple units up to 18 dwelling units per acre.

West Athens-Westmont Residential 3 (R-3). Accommodates medium density developments such as apartment or condominiums close to transit and other services at up to 30 dwelling units per acre.

RPD-5000-10U - Residential Planned Development (RPD-5000-10U). Standards are unchanged and remain consistent with Title 22 of the Los Angeles County code.

Neighborhood Commercial (C-2). Serves the local retail and service needs of the residents, employees and students in West Athens-Westmont allowing for the development of neighborhood-serving uses such as markets with ancillary goods, retail, services, and restaurants.

Civic Center (CC). Allows opportunities for non-civic uses including commercial, multifamily residential and public open space, where appropriate, to occur with civic uses located along Imperial Highway.

Mixed Use 1 (MXD-1). Promotes development of a mix of commercial, office, and residential uses up to 30 dwelling units per acre with an emphasis on neighborhood serving uses.

Mixed Use 2 (MXD-2). Supports a transit-supportive environment providing a higher-intensity mix of retail, office, restaurant uses, and residential development in a more compact and walkable setting with a density up to 60 dwelling units per acre.

Public Institutional (IT). Provides for established public uses including schools, parks, and other public uses for the purposes of community open space, recreation, sense of identity and safe connections to points of destination.

Buffer Zone (B-1). Provides a buffer from the I-105 Glenn Anderson Freeway appropriate for passive recreation, landscaping and parking lots. Buildings or permanent structures are not permitted under this category.

Comprehensive design guidelines for all zones ensure a high quality built environment. Design guidelines regulate building placement and orientation, frontages, and materials and provide consideration of public realm improvements for pedestrian circulation, landscaping, street trees, fences, walls and outdoor lighting.

MOBILITY AND PUBLIC REALM

The Mobility Strategy for the Specific Plan describes the circulation improvements needed to support transit oriented development. A key component is the transformation of the

current network to one that places a higher priority on the principles of complete streets and multi-modal design. To support transit-oriented development, the plan sets the following mobility goals:

- Improve accessibility to transit through the provision of streetscape improvements, high quality bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, wayfinding signage and other enhancements consistent with Metro's First/Last Mile Strategic Plan.
- Design streets to facilitate safe, accessible connections between major destinations for multiple modes of transportation.
- Develop and incorporate parking management strategies that encourage the efficient use of parking resources and support programs that can reduce the parking supply needed.

The mobility goals are implemented through improvements coordinated with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, such as additional landscaping and bike lanes and multi-modal design along Vermont Avenue (Class II bike lanes), 120th Street (Class II bike lanes), Budlong Ave (Class III bike lanes), Western Avenue (Class II bike lanes) and Normandie Avenue (Class II bike lanes).

Along Vermont Avenue, the Specific Plan recommends redesigning the west-side entrance to the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station with ample amenities to improve the comfort and safety of transit users. The Specific Plan also proposes design guidelines to promote safer routes to school that include: appropriate levels of street lighting installed on both sides of wide streets, appropriate traffic controls at pedestrian crossings, and curb ramps with warning strips to facility the safe crossing of pedestrians including those with mobility or vision impairments.

Finally, the Plan seeks to remedy the lack of connectivity between the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station and LASC by recommending a multi-use path be constructed adjacent to the I-105 freeway right of way. This path would provide students and staff a safe and more direct path of travel making the Green Line a more attractive alternative for getting to the LASC campus.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Infrastructure. Addresses the critical infrastructure requirements associated with future development in the Specific Plan area, including water, sewer, stormwater, solid waste, and public services. This section identifies the specific water supply and sewer facilities within the plan area that may require upgrades and finds that other utilities and systems are adequate to accommodate potential new growth.

Economic Development Strategy. Facilitating economic growth within the Specific Plan area with require concrete and sustained public intervention. Economic development refers to support for the success and proliferatin of businesses as well as support for

increased employment opportunities, household incomes, skills and overall economic security. The Economic Development Strategy provides a framework for the practical implementation and realization of the Specific Plans economic development objectives with near-term and medium-term strategies:

Near-Term Strategies (Place-Based Interventions):

- Make Bicycle, Pedestrian and Placemaking Improvements
- Use the Façade Improvement Program
- Begin Brownfield Remediation Process at I-105/Normandie
- Implement Specific Plan Design Guidelines

Near-Term Strategies (Programmatic Interventions):

- Community-driven initiative to improve safety
- Expand skills training and job readiness with LASC
- Establish a homeless housing motel initiative

Medium- and Long-Term Strategies (Place-Based Interventions):

- Public Development of Joint Amenities
- Joint Development with LASC

Medium- and Long-Term Strategies (Programmatic Interventions):

- Establish off-campus community programming and facilities
- Develop small business incentives
- Encourage a mix of job-providing tenants
- Affordable housing development, preservation and rehabilitation
- Establish a land banking and/or land trusting strategy

PLAN CONSISTENCY

LOS ANGELES COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The Specific Plan is consistent with and/or implements a number of policies and objectives of the General Plan. The General Plan emphasizes the concept of sustainability through its five guiding principles:

- Employ Smart Growth
- Ensure community services and infrastructure are sufficient to accommodate growth
- Provide the foundation for a strong and diverse economy
- Promote excellence in environmental resource management
- Provide healthy, livable and equitable communities

The General Plan includes the establishment of TODs as a main policy area. The Transit Oriented District Program (General Plan Implementation Program LU-2) includes the following goals:

- Increase walking, bicycling, and transit ridership and reduce vehicle miles traveled;
- Facilitate compact, mixed use development;
- Increase economic activity;
- Facilitate the public investment of infrastructure improvements; and,
- Streamline the environmental review process for future infill development projects.

The Transit Oriented District Program is also described in the General Plan Housing Element (Program 6). The following are some of the applicable General Plan Land Use Element and Housing Element policies:

Policy LU 4.1:	Encourage infill development in urban and suburban areas on vacant, underutilized, and/or brownfield sites.
Policy LU 4.3:	Encourage transit-oriented development in urban and suburban areas with the appropriate residential density along transit corridors and within station areas.
Policy LU 4.4:	Encourage mixed use development along major commercial corridors in urban and suburban areas.
Policy LU 5.1:	Encourage a mix of residential land use designations and development regulations that accommodate various densities, building types and styles.
Policy LU 5.2:	Encourage a diversity of commercial and retail services, and public facilities at various scales to meet regional and local needs.
Policy LU 5.3:	Support a mix of land uses that promote bicycling and walking, and reduce VMTs.
Policy LU 5.10:	Encourage employment opportunities and housing to be developed in proximity to one another.
Policy M 5.1:	Facilitate transit-oriented land uses and pedestrian-oriented design, particularly in the first-last mile connections to transit, to encourage transit ridership.
Policy M 5.2:	Implement parking strategies that facilitate transit use and reduce automobile dependence.
Policy PS/F 1.5:	Focus infrastructure investment, maintenance and expansion efforts where the General Plan encourages development.
Policy ED 2.5:	Encourage employment opportunities to be located in proximity to housing.
Policy ED 2.7:	Incentivize economic development and growth along existing transportation corridors and in urbanized areas.
Policy ED 4.4:	Incentivize infill development in urban and suburban areas that revitalizes underutilized commercial and industrial areas.

Policy 2.1: (Housing Element)	Support the development of housing for low and moderate income households and those with special needs near employment and transit.
Policy 2.2: (Housing Element)	Encourage mixed use developments along major commercial and transportation corridors.

The following are General Plan Goals with details and explanation of how the Specific Plan works toward achieving them.

- Infill development and redevelopment that strengthens and enhances communities.

Mixed use developments are encouraged along major avenues with comprehensive design guidelines that emphasize the street environment. Sidewalks are enlivened by encouraging widening, new bicycle infrastructure, street trees, and street furniture and by accommodating new uses like outdoor dining that would bring people outdoors.

- Vibrant, livable and healthy communities with a mix of land uses, services and amenities.

The Specific Plan designates areas that provide opportunities for retail and residential mixed use and adds potential for more opportunities for active transportation. A more intensive mixed use is also applied to provide potential for more employment generating uses that support the LASC campus while also providing new, desirable and affordable housing options in proximity to the Metro station and other local amenities.

- Land use planning and transportation management that facilitates the use of transit.

The Specific Plan focuses on enhancing connectivity between the LASC campus and the Vermont/Athens Green Line station but also recognizes the important role that buses play in the lives of area transit users. Bicycle and pedestrian improvements throughout the area will make it easier and more comfortable for people to access these services as well as the Metro station.

- A coordinated, reliable, and equitable network of public facilities that preserves resources, ensures public health and safety, and keeps pace with planned development.

The Specific Plan takes a measured approach that increases residential densities based on economic analysis of what the area could reasonably accommodate in the foreseeable future. This increased density is planned for with an understanding of the infrastructure investments identified and capital improvements that are needed as development occurs.

- Land use practices and regulations that foster economic development and growth.

The Specific Plan applies a land use strategy to take advantage of ongoing public investments in West Athens-Westmont by providing design guidelines and allowable densities for mixed development that will increase housing and employment opportunities and provide better access to the station. It allows the flexibility for areas to transition naturally as demand increases to meet the needs of students and residents who live, shop and work in the area.

- Sustainable communities with access to employment opportunities, community facilities and services, and amenities.

The Specific Plan implements a targeted mixed use strategy that balances preserving the community character of West Athens-Westmonts unique neighborhoods with opportunities of significant public investment in the region. The Specific Plan allows the area to grow to include commercial and residential mixed uses, increase housing densities, and provide for additional neighborhood-serving retail uses that will support and promote walking and biking.

WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT COMMUNITY PLAN

The West Athens-Westmont Community Plan was adopted on March 15, 1989, to establish land use and zoning that supported policies to preserve and improve the quality of life in the community. The land use policies recommended infill development and redevelopment to improve the economic base, while precluding intensification of existing residential neighborhoods. The Specific Plan replaces the West Athens-Westmont Community Plan provisions for the Specific Plan area. For consistency, the land use categories established in the West Athens-Westmont Community Plan are amended within the Specific Plan area to align with the updated land use categories provided in the General Plan. The West Athens-Westmont Community Plan is otherwise unchanged and remains in place for the portions of unincorporated West Athens-Westmont that are outside of the Specific Plan area.

WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT COMMUNITY STANDARDS DISTRICT (CSD)

The West Athens-Westmont Community Standards District CSD is a zoning overlay district established to provide a means of implementing special development standards necessary to ensure the goals and policies of the West Athens-Westmont Community Plan. The Specific Plan also replaces the CSD provisions for the Specific Plan area. The West Athens-Westmont CSD is otherwise unchanged and remains in place for the portions of unincorporated West Athens-Westmont that are outside of the Specific Plan area.

STEP BY STEP LA COUNTY: PEDESTRIAN PLANS FOR UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

A concurrent effort in the West Athens-Westmont community, led by Public Health has also been underway. The Step by Step LA County: Pedestrian Plans for Unincorporated Communities program was initiated to provide a policy framework for how the County is proposing to get more people walking, make walking safer and support healthy active lifestyles. It includes comprehensive Community Pedestrian Plans for five unincorporated communities, including West Athens-Westmont, and provided opportunities for joint outreach and in-depth collaboration. It is currently under final review by the Department of Public Works and is anticipated to be presented to the Regional Planning Commission this fall and to the Board of Supervisors for adoption by the end of the year. The policies and recommendations in Step by Step LA County are compatible and complement the active transportation strategies in the Specific Plan.

MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM (MMRP)

Public Resources Code, Section 21081.6, requires that an agency adopt a monitoring or reporting program for any project for which it has made findings pursuant to Public Resources Code 21081 or adopted a Negative Declaration pursuant to 21080(c). Such a program is intended to ensure the implementation of all mitigation measures adopted through the preparation of an EIR or Negative Declaration. The MMRP is included as Chapter 2 in the Final EIR, is included as an attachment to this memo, and can also be found on the Specific Plan web page.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

A Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was circulated for a 45 day public review and comment from May 16, 2018, to June 29, 2018, pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reporting requirements. The DEIR was posted online and a copy was sent to the Woodcrest Library and the A.C. Bilbrew Library. The Notice of Completion/Availability was mailed and emailed to 3931 postal addresses and 54 email addresses and was published in the Long Beach Press Telegram on May 15, 2018. A public meeting to take comments on the Draft EIR was held on May 24, 2018. The County received four (4) comment letters and no comments from two (2) attendees at the DEIR public meeting. All comments are addressed in the Response to Comments section of the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR).

The FEIR contains a summary of the potential environmental effects of the Specific Plan, the recommended mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid those effects, and the level of significance after mitigation. Implementation of the mitigation measures, as detailed in each environmental analysis section presented in the EIR, would reduce most of the potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level. However, even with the implementation of the mitigation measures, the plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts in the following areas: air quality, cultural resources, greenhouse

gas emissions, and transportation and traffic. The FEIR, which includes the DEIR, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and Response to Comments is attached as Exhibit B and C.

NOTIFICATION

A notice of public hearing and consideration of the Specific Plan and Final EIR was mailed and emailed to 3,931 postal addresses and 54 email addresses and was published in the Long Beach Press Telegram on August 9, 2018. Furthermore, the Draft Specific Plan and EIR was made available on the project website, at the Woodcrest Library and A.C. Bilbrew Library and at the DRP offices downtown. The FEIR was available for review at least 10 days prior to the public hearing date.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Sixteen outreach events, including four hosted workshops and meetings with public stakeholders, occurred in the community beginning in 2016. Throughout the planning process for the Specific Plan, Regional Planning staff met with and received input from the following local community groups: Southwest Community Association, West Athens-Westmont Task Force, West Athens-Westmont Best Startcritand Los Angeles Southwest College. Regional Planning staff also attended and participated stakeholder meetings for the Concerned Citizens of Willowbrook; the HawthorNEXT Specific Plan [for the nearby Metro Green Line Crenshaw Station]; the Second District Empowerment Congress, Economic Development Committee; and at meetings with plot-holders at the West Athens Victory Garden, which is managed by the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust.

HOSTED PUBLIC WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS

- Public Workshop #1: April 7, 2016 – “SWOT Analysis” – Chester Washington Golf Course (26 attendees)
- Public Workshop #2: May 14, 2016 – “SWOT Analysis” – Chester Washing Golf Course (14 attendees)
- Public Meeting #3: October 6, 2016 – “Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, Goals & Objectives” – Helen Keller Park Community Recreation Room (21 attendees)
- Public Meeting #4 December 8, 2016 – “Opportunity Areas and Proposed Zoning” – Helen Keller Park Community Recreation Room (9 attendees)

COMMUNITY SURVEY AND OPEN HOUSE TABLES

Another outreach tool utilized was an online survey provided to local stakeholders. This informal, information survey was released on March 17, 2016, and closed on February 6, 2017. A total of 57 surveys were collected. Additionally, DRP staff hosted information tables at the Weingart YMCA Wellness & Aquatic Center Healthy Kids Community Day, the 74th Street/Raymond Avenue Elementary School Fair, and the Juneteenth Community Celebration in Willowbrook.

COURTESY NOTICES AND MAILINGS

More than 3,931 courtesy postcard notices were mailed and 54 emails sent to announce public meetings on April 7, 2016, (Public Workshop #1); May 14, 2016, (Public Workshop #2); October 6, 2016, (Public Workshop #3); December 4, 2016, (Public Workshop #4); June 15, 2017, (Public Scoping Meeting); and May 24, 2018 (Public Meeting to Take Comments on the Draft EIR).

PROJECT TASK FORCE

A project task force of County departments, State agencies and local partners held five quarterly meetings starting in February 2016, establishing relationships at the start of the project that carried through to the environmental review. Members of the task force included staff from County and County-family departments including the Arts Commission, Community Development Commission, Fire Department, Public Works, Public Health, Parks and Recreation, Health Services, Mental Health, the Sheriff's Department and Metro. Other representatives were from Los Angeles Southwest College as well as planning staff from Caltrans and planners from the cities of Inglewood, Hawthorne, Gardena, and Los Angeles.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation is made prior to the public hearing and is subject to change based upon the testimony and/or documentary evidence presented at the public hearing:

Connect Southwest LA: A TOD Specific Plan for West Athens-Westmont offers an opportunity to create more engaging and vibrant places by leveraging the community's assets, connecting uses and activities and laying the groundwork for attracting future investment. The Specific Plan provides for mixed-use areas with aesthetically-pleasing building design and parking requirements complemented with bicycle and pedestrian public realm improvements that will enhance connectivity and make it easier to use public transportation.

Staff recommends the Regional Planning Commission close the public hearing, and adopt the resolution recommending that the Board of Supervisors certify and adopt the EIR (Environmental Assessment No. RPPL2017009622; State Clearinghouse No. 2018051051), adopt the CEQA Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations, adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; and adopt a resolution recommending approval to the Board of Supervisors for Advance Planning Project No. 2016-000317.

I MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING, AND ADOPT THE RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CERTIFY AND ADOPT THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. RPPL2017009622 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2017051051) PREPARED FOR CONNECT SOUTHWEST LA: A TOD SPECIFIC PLAN FOR WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT ADVANCE PLANNING PROJECT NO. 2016-000317-(2) PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT, ADOPT THE CEQA FINDINGS AND STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS, AND ADOPT THE MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM.

I MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPT THE RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING APPROVAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF CONNECT SOUTHWEST LA; A TOD SPECIFIC PLAN FOR WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT ADVANCE PLANNING PROJECT NO. 2016-000317-(2).

If you need further information, please contact Leon Freeman at (213) 974-6406 or lfreeman@planning.lacounty.gov. Department office hours are Monday through Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Department is closed on Fridays.

Exhibits:

- A. Connect Southwest LA: A TOD Specific Plan for West Athens-Westmont – Public Hearing Draft, August 2018
- B. Final Environmental Impact Report on CD
- C. Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Program
- D. CEQA Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations
- E. Draft Resolution of the Regional Planning Commission
- F. Draft Zoning Ordinance
- G. Community Plan Land Use Amendments
- H. Zone Change Map

AJB:MC:AG:LF

